
Mr. John Barnard's

SERMON

On II Kings II. 14.



Elijah's Mantle.

A
SERMON
Preached at the
FUNERAL
OF

That aged and faithful Servant of
GOD,

The REVEREND

Mr. Samuel Cheever,

Pastor of a Church of Christ in
Marblehead;

Who deceased, *May 29, 1724.*

Ætatis Suæ, 85.

By *John Barnard, A. M.* ✕

His Colleague Pastor.

*With long Life will I satisfy him, and shew him my Salva-
tion. PS. XCI. 16.*

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Brick Meeting-House, in Cornhill. 1724



A

Funeral Sermon

Upon the Reverend

Mr. Samuel Cheever.

II. King. II. 14,

And he took the Mantle of Elijah, that fell from him, and smote the Waters, and said, Where is the Lord God of Elijah?

FAMOUS is the History of *Elijah*, the renowned Prophet of the God of *Israel*; his Zeal for the Lord of Host, his Fidelity and Courage in his Masters Service, the Miracles which he wrought, and his triumphant Ascension into Heaven, in a Chariot of Fire, make a considerable Figure in the sacred Story. Nor less illustrious is *Elisha*, whom God had ordered *Elijah* to anoint his Successor, to be a Prophet of the Lord in his room. Tho' *Elijah* is jealous of the Name and

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Honour of the God of Israel, yet is he not jealous of his own Name and Honour; but, while he is yet alive, takes his Successor under his Patronage, does what he can to furnish him for his Work, to raise him in the Esteem and Affections of the People, and rejoices that he is like to leave the work of the Lord in such able Hands, ready to sing his *nunc dimittis*, now Lord lettest thou thy Servant depart in Peace.

THIS Chapter where my Text is, contains the History of *Elijah's* Translation; (for God honoured him at his Death, that he went an unusual road to Glory) and *Elisha's* entering upon the prophetick Function. *Elisha* was apprised of the glorious Exit his *Master* was about to make, and resolves to keep close to him, that he might loose none of the advantages of his Instruction and Converse, and that he might have his own Faith in the invisible World strengthened by the opening of such a bright Scene of Glory.

ELIJAH having made his last visit to the several Colleges of the Prophets, and taken his leave of them, now bids *Elisha* ask what he shall do for him, e're he departs from him.

GREAT the Request which *Elisha* makes; which shewed his Mind intently fixed upon his Work, and that he desired nothing more than to be thorowly furnished for it. *Let* (says he) *a double Portion of thy Spirit be upon me*; double to the rest of the Sons of the Prophets, that he might be acknowledged his Successor, and worthy the Dignity.

Elijah

ELIJAH grants his Request, upon Condition of his seeing him when he ascended, if he continue faithful to him to the last. And God said Amen to it.

ANON the illustrious Scene appears, the bright Seraphs take *Elijah* in their flaming Chariot, conduct him thro' the Devil's Territories, and give him a quick, safe, and easy passage to Glory, and *Elisha* saw it. Upon which,

HE first pays his last Homage to his endeared Predecessor, drops a Tear at his Departure, bright almost as the Chariot the Prophet rode in, celebrates his Worth, expresses his just esteem and veneration for him, and groans out his Sorrows, in strains as weighty almost as his Loss, *My Father, my Father, the Chariot of Israel, and the Horsemen thereof.*

AND then, he immediately applied himself to the business of his Function: he saw *Elijah* ascend, and he lays hold on the promise made him, and takes up the Mantle of the Prophet, the Badge of his Office, as a sure pledge left him, of his succeeding him in his Office, and of a double portion of his Spirit resting upon him; and returns directly to the School of the Prophets at *Jericho*, to shew the tokens of the Divine Presence with him, have his Office recognised, and begin his Charge. In his way thither, the River *Jordan* interrupted his Passage, and affords the *first* Proof of his Mission, and the Spirit of God resting upon him, as it was the *last* of *Elijah's*, Which brings me to my Text,

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AND he took the *Mantle of Elijah*, &c. He had *formerly felt the sacred Force the wondrous Power of it, when *Elijah* first cast it over him, and now he is willing to try whether it will be as mighty in its Operations, in his Hands, as it had || lately been in the Hands of the old Prophet.

AND he smote the Waters, so he had seen his Master do before him, and now that he succeeded him, he is ready to tread in his Steps, and use the like Means that the departed Prophet had done, to manifest his Authority, and fulfil his Ministry.

AND said, *Where is the Lord God of Elijah?* Not as doubting His Being, or his Omnipresence, but 'tis an earnest putting in suit the promise *Elijah* had made him, in the Name of his God. 'Elijah indeed is gone, but *Elijah's* God remains, and so long the promise is sure. *Where is the Lord God of Elijah?* 'Tis an earnest but humble Address to God to be with him, as He had been with *Elijah*, sufficiently to authorise and furnish him to his Work, to remove every Difficulty which lay in his way, to own him in his Office, and crown him with Success.

AND God heard the Request of *Elisha*, immediately gave Answer, and evident Proof of *Elijah's* Spirit resting upon him. For no sooner had he smitten the Waters, but the obedient Waves, as tho' they were conscious of the Divine Energy that accompanied the stroak,
flow

flee before *Elisha's* God, and make way for his return to *Jericbo*; where the Sons of the Prophets, convinced by the dividing of the Waters, that the Spirit of *Elijah* rested upon him, came and did him Reverence, bowed down to him, and acknowledged him their Head.

HOW entertaining the History! and how full of Instruction!

To resume my Text, *And he took the Mantle of Elijah that fell from him*, that is as was noted the badge of his Office: So *Elisha* becomes possessed not only of the *Mantle*, but of the same Character and Office of *Elijah*, of his Authority and Dignity, of his Care and Charge. So God takes care to raise up his Prophets, to supply his Church and People, as their wants call for; *Elijah* dies, but the Office dies not with him.

Whence I note,

Ob. I. *THAT* when God calls home His *Elijah's*, He will raise up *Elisha's* to succeed them. God always will have work to do in this World, so long as the present frame of it shall continue, and therefore He will always find fit Instruments to do His Work; He improves one Instrument where, and so long as seemeth good to Him, and then He lays that by, and makes use of an other, as He pleases, and still is but carrying on His great Work and Design by them.

1. GOD is often calling home His *Elijah's* to Himself. The Ministers of Religion have no more pretensions to Immortality than their Neighbours, but alike are they laid in the dust, and the worm shall cover them. For the Pro-

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phets of the Lord are but Men, cloathed with Flesh, lyable to Casualties, Diseases and Death with other Men; and their very Make and Constitution will not suffer them to continue here always. For no Man living is in Strength so great that he should still live for ever, and not see the Pit; the Grave is the House appointed for all the living, nor can any plead an exemption therefrom; we see that wise Men die, as well as the fool and the brutish Person. *Zac. i. 5. Your Fathers where are they? and the Prophets do they live for ever?* no not as to their abode in Flesh, and residence in this World. Nor would they chosse to continue here always; the blessed Hope of the glorious Rewards of their faithful Services, makes them willing rather to be absent from the Body, that they may be present with the Lord. Nor will their gracious God continue them always in a state of Labour and Peril. God may sometimes spare them to the World, as Blessings in it, even unto a great old Age, yet He will not suffer them to be always in this World; but will in due time, as seemeth good to Him, who is Lord of Life and Death, call them home to Himself, to the blessed Rest he has provided for them, whither they retire when they are dismantled of their Flesh, even to an House not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens; they rest from their Labours and their Works follow them, and they shall be ever with the Lord.

THEY live for ever in the superiour Regions of Light and Joy, otherwise God would not have been the God of *Elijah* when he had left
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the Earth; but rather than they shall live for ever here, God will take an uncommon Method to fetch them home; He'll make a visible descent of flaming Ministers of His, who shall take them under their strong Convoy, and cause them triumphantly to *leap the Ditch where Mankind usually falls*, and ascend directly to their native Skyes. So *Elijah* went up as by a Whirlwind and a Chariot of Fire into Heaven, v. 11.

2. BUT when God so removes His Prophets by Translation, or in the more common road to Death, He will take care to provide others, to raise up *Elisha's*, to fill their Place, and perform their Labours among His People. When He says to *Moses* go up and die, He will say to *Joshua* arise thou. Here,

1. GOD always had, and always will have a People in the World, till the final consummation of all things; and accordingly He always will have His Prophets, or an Order of Men, to minister in holy Things; to publish his Laws, declare His Threatnings, and proclaim His Promises, and direct His People in the path of Life.

FROM the Beginning the right of instructing seems to have resided in the head of the Family; but when God had called a Nation to be a peculiar People to Himself, He then constituted one of the twelve Tribes to be the keepers of His Laws, and the Ministers of His Altars, the Stewards of His House, and the Instructors of His People.

AND so has he authorised and commissioned, by His Son *Jesus Christ* our Lord, a standing

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Order of Men in the days of the Gospel, (tho' not confined to a particular Family or Tribe) to be as His ordinary Prophets, attending continually to this very thing; to represent the Person of His Son, the great Head of the Church; as Embassadors for *Christ*, to negotiate the grand Affairs of Peace and Reconciliation between God and Man.

BEFORE the Canon of the Sacred Scripture was compleated, God raised up His extraordinary Prophets, who under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost, predicted Futurities, and revealed the Mind of God in things as yet not known; but since the Son of God in His own Person, and His Apostles immediately from Him, have perfected the Rule of Faith and Manners, so that there remains nothing more to be added to the *Sacred Code*, there seems to be no further occasion for such extraordinary Prophets; and therefore the ordinary Preachers of the Gospel are the only remaining standing Order of Prophets, to whom God, by His Son, hath committed the Oversight Care and Charge of His People, to divulge His Laws and Ordinances, lay open His Covenant, lead Men into the Blessing, and apply the Seals of the Covenant to them, and to debar and cut off the visibly prophane and unholy from meddling with His hallowed Institutions.

WHEREVER God has provided Himself a Church, there He will also take care to provide such as shall minister to them in holy Things, to gather together His Elect, and fill up the Body of His Church, the fulness of Him who filleth

fillet all in all. Hence 'tis we read, Eph. IV. II— *And he gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the Faith, and Knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*

2. TO these His ordinary Ministers, He commits the sacred Badge, as the *Mantle of Elijah*, the Divine Commission, Authority and Power, of the Guides, Overseers, and Rulers of His Church; and will continue to raise up of the same Order of Men, invested with the same sacred Office, Power and Betrustment, even to the worlds end. Hence our Saviour said to His Apostles, when He deliver'd their full Commission to them, with an eye to them that should succeed them thro'out all Generations, *Lo I am with you always, to the end of the World* *. 'Tis very evident, by the mode of Speech, that our Saviour engages to be with His Ministers to the end of Time; *always, and to the worlds end*, being necessarily to be understood in a literal Sense, and are explanatory one of an other: and since the Apostles did not continue always to the end of the World, but died like other Men, 'tis very evident therefore that our Saviour, when He says, *I will be with you*, meant not only with you my Apostles, but with all my Ministers that shall come after you, whom I invest with this same Commission which I

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now bestow upon you: And this necessarily supposes that there shall be such an Order of Men to the end of the World.

THE Institution was not Temporary, and to endure only for a Season, so long as our blessed Saviour and His Apostles were upon Earth; but as the Conversion of Sinners, the Confirmation of Saints, and the Regimen and Government of the House of God renders the Reason of their Office the same, to the end of World, so God will take care to raise up a succession of Ministers, a supply to His Church of Men in sacred Order, that shall wear the Character, and perform the Office of His Ministers unto His Church, till Time shall be no more.

To return,

HE, (*Elisha*) took the Mantle of *Elijah* that fell from him, and smote the Waters. So he had seen *Elijah* smite the Waters with this very Mantle but a little before; and it was with the same strong Faith in God, and Spirit of Devotion towards Him, *Elisha* smote the Waters, that *Elijah* was acted with; and when he also had smitten the Waters, they parted hither and thither, and *Elisha* went over.

From whence I note,

II. Ob. *THAT* it highly becomes those whom God puts into the Ministry, as much as may be, to tread in the laudable Steps, and be acted by the same good Spirit of those venerable Fathers, whom they have seen go before them in their Work and Service. How nearly does *Elisha* follow *Elijah*; he lays his Copy before him, and transcribes exactly

exactly after it: and the same Spirit that acted the one acted the other also. For surely it ever becomes the Prophets and Ministers of the Lord, as far as in them lies, to prevent all solœcism in Rule, incongruity of Parts, and discord in the Harmony of the divine Precepts, Institution, and Worship. Here,

I. **THEY** should tread in the same laudable Steps their venerable Fathers have gone before them in. They that rise up in the ministerial Order, in all their Services in the Temple, should be careful to walk * by the same Rule, and mind the same things, therein imitating those Men of God that go before them, so far as is consistent with Truth and Holiness. For we are not so tied up to the Example of others, as to be obliged to copy their Errors, in case they should introduce any in their Doctrine or Worship, but may very justly and laudably dissent from them in our practice therein; but so far as we see them walking in the way the great Head of the Church hath layed out, so far we should endeavour a close adherence to them. This was the apostolical Direction, *I Cor. XI. 1. Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.* If therefore their Predecessors were faithful in the House of God, strictly adhered, as they were able, to the Divine Institutions, approving themselves able Ministers of the New Testament, nourished up in the words of Faith and good Doctrine; so too should they, that rise up as in the room of their Fathers, hold fast

fast the form of sound Doctrine, which has been delivered to them; *to the Law and to the Testimony*, speaking, and acting according to the best Light they can receive therefrom.

ON the one hand, they must not basely betray the Cause and Interest of their God, give up the Rights, Dignity, and Authority of their Office and Station, to every capricious, ignorant and bold Intruder; but take the Mantle and wear it, and make such Improvement of it, as may be necessary to smite the Waters, to remove the Obstacles that lie in the way of their Masters Service, or gently cast the skirt of it over the willing and obedient.

ON the other hand, they must take heed of setting up for themselves, as tho' all were their own, and they were Lords of the Heritage; they must neither add to, nor detract from the sacred Injunctions, but carefully observe the Pattern, and Form, the outgoings and incomings of the House of God, which those who introduce them into the sacred Order have been faithful in, and make over to them as a sacred Depositum committed to their trust. They must feed the Flock of God with the same Bread and Water of Life, the same Word and Doctrine, minister the same Seals and Discipline, and maintain the same Inspection Care and Watch over them, or if possible greater; that in all things they may approve themselves faithful Stewards in the House of God, not suffering His Ordinances to be evaporated into into Smoak on the one hand, nor loaded with thick Clay on the other.

2. AND then, as he is to tread in the same regular Steps, so is he to be acted by the *same good Spirit*, of his venerable Fathers. What will the Mantle of *Elijah* avail without the Spirit of *Elijah*? He may wear the Badges of the high Office, and come into the room of an other *locally as a piece of Lumber*, but neither *rational*ly nor *morally*, as becomes a reasonable and religious Creature, unless he is acted by the same good Spirit, without which he will never make good the Ground, nor discharge the Duties of his Character. It was the Spirit more than the Mantle of *Elijah* that divided the Waters.

HE must therefore make it his first care, that the Spirit of God and Glory rests upon him; that he is awfully sensible of the unspotted Holiness and Purity of the Divine Majesty; the sacredness of the Character he takes upon him; and the real inward Holiness, and purity of Manners which becomes those that bear the Vessels of the Sanctuary; and accordingly must be careful to serve the Lord in holiness all the days of his Life, in the frame and temper of his Mind, in the duties of his Function, and in his whole Conversation.

Again, HE should endeavour after a like Spirit of Humility and Meekness, Sobriety and Gravity, Righteousness and Temperance; manifesting a low Opinion of himself, without being abject and servile; be easy of access, without a trifling Familiarity, which issues in Contempt; be ready to overlook personal Injuries,

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and condescend to the meanest, and lay aside all Levity without Moroseness; always do to others as he would that they should do to him; stand fast in his Christian Liberty, wherein Christ hath made him free, and yet not use his Liberty for an occasion to the Flesh.

Again, HE should endeavour after the same Spirit of Zeal, Courage and Fidelity. He must be zealous for the Lord of Hosts, even burn with an holy Ardour of Soul, to advance the Name, Interest, and Kingdom of God in the World; and with a fervent Indignation make head against the torrent of Vice and Immorality, which threatens to deluge all Religion, both Name and Thing; and against all Impostors that set up their Altars against Gods Altar, and would lead or force us to enquire of the God of Ekron, instead of the God of Israel. And his Zeal must be well directed, guided by Prudence, and tempered with Moderation; lest while in his pretended Zeal he call for Fire from Heaven, it prove but the result of his own Passion, and a strange Fire before the Lord.

HE must be couragious in the Cause of God, and not fear the face of Man, nor the wrath of a King, his Captains and their Fifties; but boldly, as becometh his Office, speak the Mind of God, declare His Counsels, utter His Warnings, give forth His Orders, bear Testimony against their evil Manners, and reprove the Disorders and Sins of the greatest, the most haughty, wealthy, and Supercillious, as well as the meanest under his Charge; whatsoever God shall command him, that must he speak.

Finally.

Finally, AND in all he must be Faithful, diligently attending to his Master's Business, and that continually; shewing all good Fidelity, as becomes a Steward in declaring the whole Counsel of God; dealing to every one their Portion in due Season, instructing the Ignorant, convincing Gainfayers, strengthening the Weak and Feeble, comforting the Disconsolate, resolving the Doubting, recovering the Wandring, censuring the Incurable, extending his Care to the poorest Lamb in his Flock, as well as the fattest and well-fleeced Sheep, and in all things doing nothing by partiality.

THUS should those whom God raises up to sustain the Character of His Ministers, tread in the Steps, and be acted by the same Spirit which they see in their venerable Fathers in the sacred Order.

Once more;

AND he said, *Where is the Lord God of Elijah?* It argues his entire Dependence upon God for Assistance to the discharge of the Duties, and for the success and rewards of his Office.

HE takes the Mantle, lifts it up, but smites not till he had called upon *Elijah's* God, to be with him, as He had been with *Elijah*. So he humbly and earnestly asks the fulfilment of his Master's Promise, that a double portion of his Spirit should rest upon him.

NOT the Spirit essential to him as a Man; this was impossible: *Elijah's* Soul was gone away into the heavenly World. Nor the Spirit and Temper that was accidental to him, arising from his Constitution, and temperament of Body;

dy; this was insufficient: but the Spirit of God that rested upon *Elijah*, and by His powerful Influences carried him thro' his Work, wrought so mightily in him, and by which also he ascended. This is the great Request.

THE Words therefore are a Prayer, That *Elijah's* God would be with him, authorise him to his Work, prosper him therein, and reward him.

From whence I note two things, *viz.*

Note I. *THAT the whole of the ministerial Function, in all the Powers, Duties, Success, and Rewards of it, originally flow from God.* *Elijah* was a Man of God, sacred to Him, by his Character and Station, as His Officer and Minister; and *Elisha* being about to enter upon the same Office, calls upon *Elijah's* God to derive all those Powers, Qualifications, Virtues and Graces, Assistance and Success, to him, which He had favoured *Elijah* with; by which he also might become a Man of God.

ALL of the ministerial Function, whether extraordinary, as the Prophets and Apostles, or ordinary, as the Tribe of *Levi* under the Law, and the Ministers of Religion in the Days of the Gospel, flows originally from God; but mediately thro' the Lord Jesus Christ the Head of the Church, who having ascended up on high has received such Gifts, that He might bestow them upon Men: *Not of Man, nor by Man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, Gal. I. 1.*

Thus,

1. ALL the ministerial Powers, Authority, and Qualifications are from God.

The

THE ministerial Order it self is from God, who hath appointed it in the World, even from the beginning of Time to the end thereof. But of this we have said eno' already.

THUS, they derive their *Commission*, Power and Authority from God. They are God's Ministers, appointed by Him to this very End; and who should empower them, vest them with Authority, and give them a Commission to act in that sacred Office of His Ministers, but that God alone, who hath designed them thereunto. *For no man taketh* (ought or may take) *this honour to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.* Heb. V. 4. God of old more immediately seperated the Family of *Aaron*, and the Tribe of *Levi* to the Priesthood; and in like immediate manner raised up, commissioned and inspired His ancient Prophets; and so too Jesus Christ His Son immediately called and authorised His Apostles, and sent them forth to evangelize the World; yet this hinders not but that the same God and Saviour does now empower (tho' in a more mediate way) all that are regularly invested with the ministerial Authority.

FOR how shall they go, unless they are sent? and who should send them but God? Tho' they derive their Authority now more mediately, yet is it nevertheless from the Original and Fountain thereof: whatever allowed Channel it passes thro', it still flows from the original Head.

NOR need we to lay any great stress upon a lineal uninterrupted Succession from the Apostles,

stles, the immediate Followers of our Lord; which seems not absolutely "necessary on the " one hand, nor alone sufficient on the other: But God furnishes Men for His Service, disposes them to engage in His Work, opens the Door to them, and fixes them in their Office, by those who have already received a Power from Him to convey ministerial Betrustments to them.

AND thus, God qualifies for the work of the Ministry. From Him comes all Gifts and Endowments of the Mind, both *natural*, *acquired*, and *spiritual*.

'TIS He that furnishes Men with their various natural Powers and Capacities of Mind (a); and of Him is all their sufficiency to Think or Speak, who prepareth the Heart, and giveth the Answer of the Tongue (b).

FROM Him too is derived the *Tongue of the learned*, who 'tis assists and strengthens the Powers of the Mind, by Study and Labour, Reading and Meditation, to attain to the various degrees of good Literature which He sees meet for them. And as there were of old the (c) Schools of the Prophets, where the Youth were trained up in those Exercises which prepared the way for their after Serviceableness; so now is the same Care and Pains requisite for the fitting of Youth for future Service in the Church of God, and indeed so much the more now, by how much, under the present Circumstances

(a) *Job XXXII. 8. Exod. XXXVI. 1.* (b) *Prov. XVI. 1.*

(c) As at *Jericho, Bethel, and Jerusalem, &c.*

stances of the World, "an unlearned Ministry
 "would scarce be able to produce sufficient
 "Credentials to their being sent of God.

AND from God are they endowed with that
spiritual Wisdom, and Understanding in Divine
 Things, and those measures and degrees of
 Grace, which are necessary to render them
 faithful, and able Ministers of the New Testa-
 ment. Hence says the Apostle, 1 Cor. XII. 4.
There are diversities of Gifts, which he reckons
 up, ——— and adds upon them, v. 11. *But all of
 these worketh that one and self same Spirit, dividing
 to every Man severally as He will.*

THUS 'tis God that spirits and inclines them
 to undertake so heavy a Charge. When they
 consider the Majesty of the Person whom they
 are to represent, the sacredness of the Character
 they are to sustain, the weight of the Task they
 are to undergo, and the Difficulties they are to
 encounter with in their way; well may they
 be ready to shrink back, and cry out who is
 sufficient for these things; Lord I am but a
 Child and cannot speak. But God over-rules
 their Spirits, moves their Inclinations, presses
 them into His Service, thrusts them forth into
 His Harvest, and says to them, as to *Jeremiab*,
*Fer. I. 7. But thou shalt go to all that I shall send
 thee; and all that I command thee, thou shalt speak.*
 When God thus calls them, commands them, and
 moves their Hearts, they say with *Samuel* (a),
Speak Lord, for thy Servant heareth, and with *Isa-*
iah (b), *Here am I, send me.*

Thus

(a) 1 Sam. III. 10. (b) Isa. VI. 8.

THUS again, God opens the Door for them; shews them what part of the Vineyard they are to labour in, and acquaints them with their several Duties. He moves the Hearts of a People to invite them, saying to them as the *Macedonians* to *Paul*, *Act. XVI. 9. Come over, and help us.* He has appointed to every one their Station, marked out their Work, and shewn them what He requires of them.

FINALLY, From God they derive all their Strength and Ability, to perform their Duties, and bear up under their Burdens. He inspires them with a zeal for the Honour of His Name; fills them with a tender Compassion for immortal Souls; helps them in their Labours Night and Day, in their Studies, Prayers, and Cares.

'TIS the presence of *Elijah's* God with *Elisha* enables him to wade thro' the River, and overcome the Difficulties in his way; to bear Reproaches and cruel Mockings, and preserves him in the midst of Perils and Dangers. And if they are sent upon *Isaiab's* Message, to harden Hearts, and blind Eyes, and are made to groan under the melancholy prospect, that they labour in vain, and spend their Strength for nought; how would their Hearts utterly fail them, and their Spirits be dried up like a Pot-herd, and they go mourning under the heavy Pressure? did not the Lord sustain them.

2. FROM God flows all the *Success* of their Ministry. What are we? but earthen Vessels, to whom it hath pleased the Lord to commit His Treasure, that the Power may more evidently appear to be of God.

IN vain will the Waters be smitten; *Elisha's* Arm, and *Elijah's* Mantle, the best Accomplishments and the highest Character will not be sufficient to part the Stream, unless *Elijah's* God be present. Man speaketh only to the hearing of the Ear, but God to the Heart. He causeth our Doctrine to drop as the Rain, and our Speech to distil as the Dew, as the Rain and Snow from Heaven, which accomplisheth the End for which it was sent. He maketh the Word preached to become the Power of God unto the Salvation of all them that believe. At His Commandment we spread the Nets of Salvation, and He fills them more or less, as pleaseth Him. For a *Paul* may plant, and *Apollos* water; but God only giveth the increase. 1 Cor. III. 6, 7.

3. And lastly; FROM God they receive the Rewards of their Fidelity to His Service. For He "will not keep back the Hire of His Labourers, "that have reaped down His Corn; but He will certainly distribute to every Man his Penny, when they shall rest from their Labours; their Work (the Rewards of it) shall follow them. He will overlook the Frailties and Infirmities of his faithful Ministers, blot out their Transgressions, and say to them, Well done good and faithful Servants, enter into the Joy of your Lord. And tho' they may not ascend with equal Triumph, yet they shall with equal Safety with *Elijah*, into the Heavens prepared for them.

THE greater too their Labours have been, the heavier their Burdens, the more their Sufferings

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ferings in the Cause of God, so much the more glorious shall be their Reward; for one Star differs from another in Glory.

YEA, tho' *Israel* be not gathered by their Means, yet shall they be glorious in the Eyes of the Lord; whether the People will hear, or whether they will forbear, they shall be a sweet Savour unto God, who accepteth them, not according to their Success, but their Fidelity: And when Christ the chief Shepherd shall appear, then shall they also appear with Him in Glory.

N. II. I should pass to a second Observation upon *Elisha's* saying, *Where is the Lord God of Elijah?* viz.

THAT 'tis the Duty of those that are entering upon the Ministry to pray, that the God of their venerable Fathers would be with them also. But all that has been said under the former Observation, and much more that might be added to it, are strong Arguments to enforce this Duty; for since they are to derive their Power, Qualifications, Success and Rewards, from God only, to whom then should they go, but to Him only therefor? and this necessarily leads them to give themselves unto Prayer, as well as to Reading and Meditation, that they may answer the great Ends of the Gospel Ministry. This is so obvious, that I need to say no more upon this head; but hasten to make a few Reflections upon what has been said, by way of Application.

I. HENCE learn what abundant Cause there is for Thankfulness to God, Does God take care
of,

of, and furnish His Church with His Ministers, to break the bread of Life unto His People, surely then they that are thus favoured of the Lord, are under strong Bonds of Gratitude, to present their thankful Acknowledgments to God, for His compassionate Regards to them herein.

THE Ministers of the Lord, faithful to Him, to the common Interest of Religion, and the immortal Souls of their People, are a great Blessing wherever they are; and so God intends them, by bestowing them upon a People. How soon else would a Land be over-run, not only with Atheism, and Infidelity, which would necessarily involve them under everlasting Miseries, for where the Vision faileth, the People perish (a); but even all manner of Barbarities, Rudeness, and ill Manners, which would soon strip a People of their outward visible Glory, and lay waste all their pleasant Enjoyments.

BUT has God, in His abundant Goodness, and care of a People, furnished them with full Supplies of so rich a Blessing, as His Gospel Ministers? surely then His Saints should shout aloud for Joy; He hath not dealt so with every Nation, praise ye the Lord (b).

REMEMBER, Unthankfulness for such a Mercy will be found very provoking to God, and prove the most dangerous Method to strip you of so great a Blessing.

II. HENCE then a People may learn their Duty to their Ministers. If the ministerial Order be of Divine Appointment, and they that

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are

(a) *Prov.* XXIX. 18. (b) *Psal.* CXLVII. 20.

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SURE I am, that the Gospel Ministry and Ordinances, are of Divine Appointment, and they that neglect them, do it at their utmost peril. Wherefore, remember the Words of Christ, *Luke X. 16. He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me. And, Mat. X. 14, 15. Whosoever shall not receive you nor hear your Words,—— it shall be more tolerable for the Land of Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of Judgment, than for that City.*

2. THIS shews, That you ought to submit your selves to their ministerial Teaching and Government. For if they are the Ministers of the Lord, then ought you to submit your selves to them, as unto the Lord.

THEY come to you, not in their own Name, they claim no civil Authority over you, no temporal Jurisdiction over your Persons, nor demand any Obedience and Submission to their own Laws; but they come to you in the Name, with the Authority, and at the Commandment of the great God, who sends them forth, to demand Obedience to His Laws: And therefore their Commission is to be acknowledged, and their Instructions complied with.

WHILE we preach to you, not ourselves, but Jesus Christ the Lord, we demand it of you in His Name, and at your Peril, that you not only hear us, but that you obey us.

SEARCH the Scriptures, and see, if what we declare unto you is not agreeable to the Mind of God: If it be not, then reject what we say, and regard it not; but if we only deliver our Lords Errand, if we declare only His Coun-

Counsel, and publish His Royal Will, then surely it concerns you to be the doers of the Word, and not the hearers only; then ought you to believe what we speak to you, to practice all the Duties we require of you, and to avoid all the Sins which we forbid unto you, in the Name of that Lord, whose Servants we are. For this is the true Character of a religious People, *That they have obeyed from the Heart, the form of sound Doctrine, which has been delivered to them.* Rom. VI. 17.

BUT this is not all, you must also submit your selves to the Rule and Government of your Ministers. Not that they are Lords of the Heritage, or have dominion over your Faith, but they are the helpers of your Joy. Their ministerial Watch, Guidance and Discipline, as Stewards in the House of God, entrusted with the Keys, and Treasures thereof, must be duly acknowledged, and submitted to: For thus you are called upon, *Heb. XIII. 17. Obey them that have the Rule over you, and submit your selves to them, for they watch for your Souls, as they that must give an Account, that they may do it with Joy, and not with Grief, for this is unprofitable for you.* Without this acknowledgement of, and submission to them, however humanely you may entertain them, you do not receive them as becometh Christians.

3. THIS shews, That you ought to bear a high *Veneration, Esteem, and Respect* for your Minister. For if he receive his Authority and Office from God, if he is to minister in holy things, to consult your best Interest, and aim at your
eternal

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eternal Salvation, then surely he deserves an interest in your Affections, and ought to be highly valued and revered by you.

'TIS true, he is but a Man, subject to like Passions with you: so *Elijah* was, and liable to Infirmities; God treateth not with you now by the Ministration of Angels, but by a Man, your fellow Creature, and 'tis His great Condescension and Goodness, that He does so; you are not therefore to look for Perfection in him, but to overlook his humane Weaknesses, and cast a Mantle over his Infirmities. You are to consider him, not so much what he is in himself, liable to Frailties and humane Infirmities; but what he is in his Character, the Station God has placed him in, and the Power He has invested him with, as your Minister; and while it is his care to live up, in some good measure, to his Character, to discharge the Duties of his Post, and exert his Authority, for the advancement of his Masters Glory, and your best Good, you ought to maintain a just Veneration and Esteem for him.

BRETHREN, We mean not by this to assume great Titles to our selves, and big swelling Words of Vanity; but *we beseech you to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and esteem them very highly in love, for their works sake.* 1 Thess. V. 12, 13. Know them to be but Men, and as such, pity their Weaknesses, bear with their Infirmities, put the best Construction upon their Actions, and overlook their Frailties; but know them also, in their sacred Character, to be over you in the Lord, and so hold

hold them in Reputation, and let them have a room in your good Affections, at least for their Works sake. If you do not give a good Entertainment to them in your Affections, if you do not uphold a venerable Opinion of them, and sincerely love them, it will be very unlikely, next to impossible, that you should receive the benefit of their holy Ministration.

THEIR Office is high and honourable, in the sight of God, their Commission more immediately from God, than any temporal Rulers, and therefore when they are placed as at the Feet of the People, are contemned and reviled, and Terms of Disgrace and Reproach are fastened upon them, God will resent the Indignity done to His Ambassadors, as in some sort done to Himself; he that despiseth you despiseth me. Remember the Children that mocked *Elisha*.

4. THIS shews, That they ought *honourably to be supported*. For if they are God's Ministers, appointed by Him, to this very Service, and are to attend continually hereunto, then ought you to take care that they are well provided for, and comfortably supported in their Labours. *Count those worthy of double honour that rule well, especially they who labour in the Word and Doctrine.* (1 Tim. V. 17.) Not only your Love and Esteem, but an honourable Maintainance is due unto them.

BRETHREN, We do not ask it as a Favour, that your Minister be comfortably supported; no, it is a Debt of Justice due both to God and your own Souls.

I confess it is both irksome and grievous to me, as beneath the ministerial Character, and the Duty of a People, that Ministers are ordinarily forced to contract with their People, for their Support ; or that they should be put upon asking for it : I am sure this ought to be taken care of sufficiently, without the Ministers being concerned about it. For God Himself has provided for His Ambassadors, to bear their Charge and Expence, and laid the Tax upon you to pay it in to them ; *even to communicate, unto him that teacheth, in all good things : Gal. VI. 6. For so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel. 1 Cor. IX. 14.*

AND tho' I don't say, that there ought to be the same Allowance to them, as was to the Levitical Priesthood, under the Law ; Yet, sure I am, it is not left to the caprice and humours of any Man, living under the Gospel, whether, or how much he shall contribute towards the Charge of the House and Ordinances of God : But the Minister of the Lord ought to live, (far from a state of want and dependance upon the humours of a People) so as to be an Example to the Flock in Charity and Hospitality.

AND surely they that think to save any thing, by withholding more than is meet, will find their sovereign Lord will highly resent their denying Him His Tribute, and make such Distraints upon them, as will greatly tend to impoverish them, and keep them low.

YOU owe this Duty, as to God, so to your own Souls ; for how can it be expected they should grow fat and flourishing in the House of God,

God, while your Minister shall be kept meager and in straits? Tho' for this we may be reproached, with the Term of Hirelings, yet I know who 'tis has said, *The Labourer is worthy of his Hire.* Luke X. 7. I might add,

5. THIS shews, That you should do all you can to strengthen and encourage your Minister to his Work. He is God's Minister, but 'tis for your good; and how much then should you make it your care, to strengthen his Heart and Hands to his Labour? Many will be his Discouragements, strong his Temptations from within, and he may expect to meet with hatred and opposition from abroad, and therefore will need all the Encouragement you can give him, to keep him from fainting under the heavy load. Let nothing in your Carriage add to the weight, and increase his Grievs upon him; but do what you can to make all sit light and easy, help to bear his Burdens, sympathise with him in his Afflictions, and be not ashamed of any Suffering he may meet with, in the Cause of God, from unreasonable Men; let him see in you the travel of his Soul, the fruit of his Labour, you and your Children walking in the Truth; his Joy and Comfort here, and the earnest of his Crown of rejoycing hereafter.

6 To conclude, IF all Help, Assistance and Success flows from God, then he had need of your Prayers, as well as his own; that the Lord God of *Elijah* would be with him. His Work will be great and Difficult, and his Shoulders unequal to the Burden, without the Divine Assistance; and therefore it concerns you to car-

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ry him in the Arms of your Prayers, and earnestly implore the divine Aids may be afforded to him. The holy Apostle Paul, with all his Advantages, saw his need of an interest in the peoples Prayers, and therefore once and again urgently demands it of them, as, Eph. VI. 19. *Praying always,—— and for me, that Utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my Mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel. So Rom. XV. 30. Now I beseech you, Brethren, for the Lord Jesus sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me, in your Prayers to God for me. And again, 2 Thess. III. 1. Finally, Brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified.*

THUS I do bespeak your earnest Prayers on my behalf, who stand in the room of my departed Father; helping together by your Prayers for me, without which, how can you expect the Divine Blessing on my Labours among you?

THIS is to be your daily Task, each one for himself, in his Retirement, calling upon the Name of the Lord, to carry your Minister, as he will and does you, in the Arms of your Prayers, earnestly entreating that a double portion of the Spirit of God may rest upon him, more abundantly furnish him with all necessary Gifts and Graces, own him in his Labours, and crown him with Success; that under his holy Ministry, you may become a truly religious and happy People, that you may be mutual Comforts to each other, and come together in the fulness of the blessings of the Gospel of Peace.

3. Hence

3. HENCE when it pleases God to remove any of His Servants, His Ministers from among a People, the departure of such should be duly laid to Heart. Shall an *Elijah*, the Prophet of the God of Israel, be taken away, as our Master from our Head, and the People have no sorrowful sense of their Loss therein? Surely God expects it of us, that we lay to heart such awful Providences, that we see His hand therein, and duly humble our selves under it, and in a sense of our Loss, cry out, as *Elisha* did, v. 12. *My Father, my Father; the Chariot of Israel, and the Horsemen thereof!* Able and faithful Ministers are the beauty and strength of the place where they dwell; they are as Lights to their People, and the Salt of the Earth; their Labours among a People are productive of their best Good, their Example influential to their common Advantage, their Instructions directive to their true Interest, and their earnest Prayers, and interest in the Court of Heaven, are often the ordinary means of diverting the divine Judgment from falling heavy upon their People, and they as often pull down a Blessing upon them: So that tho' they should live to be past all their other Labours, yet so long as they are capable of interceding at the Throne of Grace for their People, so long they are truly a Blessing to them; and therefore cannot be parted with without sorrowful Reflections.

AND this leads me into the mournful Theme which this day calls for, occasioned by the removal of that Man of God, the Aged, Reverend Mr. SAMUEL CHEEVER from among us.

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IT pleased God, from whom comes down every good and perfect Gift, to furnish him for the Work of the Ministry, with no small Abilities, both natural and acquired, being owner of a solid Judgment, a copious Invention, and a tenacious Memory, which were improved in him, by a due application of himself to Reading, Meditation and Prayer.

GOD brought him among you some time in *November*, 1668, from which Time, those of you that are advanced in Years, know how much he has been a common Father to the whole Town, in the many temporal Advantages which you have received from him; he truly went about doing good, and serving you in all your Interests.

BUT as preaching is peculiarly the Ministers Work, so he was well fitted herefor, by an uncommon Knowledge in the holy Scripture, being an excellent Text-man, and carrying a Body of Divinity in his Head, which he would often say to me, it was good for a Divine to be well furnished withal.

IN his publick Discourses to you, he endeavoured to preserve the truth, purity, and simplicity of the Gospel, teaching you the Truth as it is in Jesus: He made it his great care to shew you your Sin, and Danger, and where your only Remedy lies; that you might be directed to flee from the wrath to come, and lay hold on the Hope set before you. And as he aimed at the winning of Souls to his great Master, so he sought not to please your Fancy, and tickle your Ears with studied Elocution and formal

formal Periods, but delivered the Mind of God to you with such plainness, and cogency of Argument and Perswasion, as becomes the Gospel of Christ; and he shunned not to declare unto you the whole Counsel of God.

AND how fervent was he in treating with your immortal Souls, delivering himself to you with that flame and heat, that earnestness and vigour as well shewed his sincere Zeal in his Master's Service, and his hearty desire that you all might be saved: He plainly shewed the lively Impressions of the Truths he preached to you, upon his own Heart, while the fervency of his Voice pierced your Ears, that the united Light and Heat might strike the more forcibly upon your Minds, and gain the more ready Compliance with the great Truths that were delivered to you.

AND he was as constant and assiduous as fervent and zealous a Preacher of the Word of God among you; so that, if I mistake not, from his first coming among you, until the time that Age had worn him out, you never were, more than once, without the constant Entertainments of your Sabbaths, your stated Feasts, and your New Moons; tho' he was alone for about 48 Years: God so graciously confirmed his Health, that for more than 50 Years, he never was hindered from coming to you in the Name of the Lord by any Sickness.

INDEED the infirmities of Age obliged him to take leave of his publick stated Exercises in October 1719. which he did from those Words of our Saviour, *John IX. 4. I must work the works*

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works of him that sent me, while it is day ; the night cometh when no man can work. And yet about a Year after this, upon a special Occasion, he entertained us with a short, but plain and fervent Excitement, to be *zealous of good Works.*

WHILE his strength and vigour continued, he was a very just and methodical Preacher, (and doubtless had he been fixed in a politer Place, he would have made a brighter Figure) tho' in his latter days, he gave more into an expository way of treating the several Texts that occurred in his preaching: and to the last he could make no publick use of Notes, but delivered all memoriter.

AND yet after Age had laid him aside from publick Labour, he was still at his Work, and his Mind so intently set upon it, that I scarce ever came into his Company at any time, without finding him at his Study, or his Mind taken up with the publick Duties of the Sabbath, and he would be continually expressing his concern, lest he should not be able to do any thing of it, and desiring me to prepare for all the Day, lest he should not be able to come out; which plainly shewed the hearty Delight he took in his Work.

HE was a Man of Peace, of a catholick Mind, and extensive Philanthropy and good Will to all Men, without confining Religion to a particular Sect; a great Peace-maker among his contending Neighbours, and never made, or excited Parties, or so much as joined himself to any, (that I can learn) but those that were for God and Religion, against Vice and Immorality.

His

HIS Conversation was grave, yet pleasant, suitable to a steady composure of Mind, which he usually enjoyed; tho' at proper Seasons, he knew how to be warm.

HIS Life among you has been the Life of a Christian, and the whole tenour of it a manifesting an entire Submission to, and Satisfaction in the disposing Providence of God; and you your selves are Witnesses how holily and unblameably he hath behaved himself, walking before you in the paths of serious Godliness; a plain and a humble Man.

WHEN you called me to the pastoral Office, with him, a few Years ago, tho' his own Delight in the work of the Lord among you, made him not so forward as some might have expected, to have an Assistant joined with him, yet he evidenced to you an entire Satisfaction in your Proceedings; and I have cause to acknowledge the goodness of God to me herein, that as a Son with a Father, so he received me, repeating the Words of good old *Simeon*, upon his return to his House from my publick Ordination, *Now, Lord, lettest thou thy Servant depart in Peace.*

IT was a signal and uncommon Favour of God to him, that tho' he lived to the Age of fourscore and almost five, yet he had so settled a Constitution, and firm a Health, as to be able to say, that he never was Sick in all his Life;

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a days Indisposition, and some small touches of the Sciatica, he has sometimes known: And as his Health was firm, so at upwards of fourscore, he could read without the help of Spectacles, and had his Hearing quick as Youth, to the last week of his Life; but the Powers of his Mind, for some few Years before he died, failed, especially his Memory, whereby he was greatly unfitted even for common Conversation; and yet his constant Family Prayers were orderly, and regular; so did Grace shine in the decays of Nature.

AND while the decays of Age laid him by from publick Service, how exemplarily Patient was he under such a Rebuke? He would often say to me, 'Age is too heavy for me, but I must bear it; I can't die when I would, I must patiently wait God's Time, my Times are in His Hands, I rejoyce to see that God has provided for His People before I go; God has satisfied me with long Life——.

THUS continued he at Work, and patiently submitting to the Will of God, till a few days ago his Senses wholly left him, and the Night before last he died, and truly died; his Lamp of Life fairly burning out, without being put out; for he felt no Sicknes nor Pain to the last, nor shewed any the least tokens of them even in his expiring Moments.

SO, while by the Grace of Christ in him, he was secured against the Terrours of the second

cond Death, thro' the Favour of God to him, he knew nothing of the usual ghastly Harbingers, nor the shocking Terrours of a natural Death; but as he was always calm, and easy, in the possession of a comfortable Hope, without strong emotions of Joy, or the distress of anxious Fears, so he quietly fell asleep in Jesus, and is gone to receive the Rewards of his long and faithful Services.

I will only add, that the little Time I have had, will sufficiently apologize, that I have given no better Account of this aged, and faithful Servant of Jesus Christ; and yet such as it is, I know his humble modest Tho'ts of himself, would not have been easily prevailed upon to have allowed it; for I well remember, that about a Month or two ago, upon my asking him a Question, which he happened to misunderstand, he replied to me, with some warmth, "Prithee, don't go about to flatter me; 'tis eno' that I stand to my own Master; my greatest care is to be accepted of him."

AND now may the God of all Grace and Consolation, afford his most compassionate Regards, unto the devout and meek Hand-maid of the Lord, who has been the Companion of his Days for about fifty four Years; comfort her under her Sorrows, and give unto her an happy and endless meeting with him in Glory.

MAY God be a Father unto the mourning Children, and more abundantly enrich them with

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with the Blessings of Goodness, and return into their Bosome the many Prayers their ascended Father hath laid out for them.

MAY God take care of this bereaved Town, and Flock of His, and always shower down of the Gifts and Graces of His Spirit upon it; and especially may I take hold of *Elijah's* Mantle, and say, *Let a double portion of his Spirit rest upon me.*

MY Brethren, call to Mind the Things which you have heretofore heard and learned, from your deceased Pastor, and so let aged *Samuel*, now dead, yet speak unto you; and be you followers of him, wherein he followed *Christ*: And may God reward your Kindness, and the good Will of the Town, in the Support, which to their Honour, they have continued to afford to him, notwithstanding his being called off from publick Usefulness for some Years past.

NOW make your earnest and daily Prayers for your surviving Pastor, that he may be strengthened to his Work, and succeeded therein.

AND let it be the care of us all so to live, that we may die in Peace, like him that is now gone before us; that when our Dust returns to its Dust, our Spirits may ascend to the Lord God of *Elijah*; that we and our departed Father, may have a happy meeting at the Right Hand

Hand of Christ, that we may be a Crown of Rejoicing to him in the Day of the Lord, and he may be able to say concerning us, *Behold I, and the Children which God has graciously given to me*; and we may mutually be employed in the everlasting Services of the Redeemer, and be together unspeakably and for ever happy in the possession of the Crown of Glory, which fadeth not away.

NOW the God of Peace which brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, thro' the Blood of the everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good Work, to do His Will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight; thro' Jesus Christ, to whom be Glory for ever and ever. AMEN.

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